

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 143589

16

ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-13 PC-04 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 /125 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:BCROGERS:SM EXT. 20849

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APPROVED BY AF:DDNEWSOM

AF/E:HRMELONE

AF/RA:MR. WALKER

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R 202355Z JUL 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 143589

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, ET, SO

SUBJ: SOMALI DEMARCHE ON BORDER PROBLEM

1. ON JULY 18, AMBASSADOR ADDOU GAVE ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM DIPLOMATIC NOTE REQUESTING UNITED STATES TO USE GOOD OFFICES TO PERSUADE IEG "TO DESIST FROM THEIR CONTEMPLATED AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS" AGAINST SOMALIA. NOTE SAID GSDR HAD INTELLIGENCE INDICATING IEG DETERMINED TO ATTACK SOMALIA BEFORE FIRST MEETING OF OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE. COPY OF NOTE BEING POUCHED.

2. NEWSOM EXPRESSED U.S. CONCERN OVER DISPUTE BUT EMPHASIZED U.S. DESIRE TO AVOID OVERINVOLVEMENT IN PURELY AFRICAN MATTER ALREADY BEING CONSIDERED BY EIGHT NATION COMMITTEE OF OAU. HE NOTED THAT AFRICAN NATIONS  
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PAGE 02 STATE 143589

MORE LIKELY TO INFLUENCE OPPOSING SIDES THAN NON-AFRICAN

ONES SUCH AS UNITED STATES.

3. NEWSOM THEN REPEATED NUMEROUS REASSURANCES GIVEN UNITED STATES BY HIM AND OTHER HIGH RANKING IEG OFFICIALS THAT ETHIOPIA HAS NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS AGAINST SOMALIA. ON CONTRARY, HE SAID, IEG GREATLY FEARS POSSIBLE SOMALI ATTACK. NEWSOM REVIEWED STATEMENTS TO US BY TOP IEG MILITARY OFFICIALS DENYING AGGRESSIVE INTENT AND CITED EMBASSY REPORTS THAT IEG FORCES DEFINITELY IN DEFENSIVE NOT OFFENSIVE POSITIONS ALONG BORDER. NEWSOM

THEN DOWNGRADED ADDOU'S CLAIM THAT ETHIOPIAN FORCES NUMBERED 70,000 AND NOTED IEG MILITARY HAD NEVER REACHED EVEN 40,000.

4. APPEARING SOMEWHAT RELIEVED, ADDOU THEN REQUESTED U.S. TO PROPOSE TO IEG SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN MILITARY PULL-BACK FROM BORDER AREA. HE STRESSED DANGER OF CURRENT CONFRONTATION AND EVER-PRESENT POSSIBILITY THAT SMALL INCIDENT COULD ESCALATE INTO WAR.

5. NEWSOM COMMENTED THAT BEST VEHICLE FOR PULL-BACK PROPOSAL WAS OAU COMMITTEE AND ASKED IF GSDR HAD DISCUSSED IDEA WITH COMMITTEE. ADDOU BELIEVED THAT GSDR HAD MADE SUCH SUGGESTION BUT WAS UNSURE. HE SAID HE WAS DOUBTFUL IEG WOULD HEED SUCH PROPOSAL FROM OAU COMMITTEE BUT BELIEVED IEG WOULD LISTEN IF SUGGESTION CAME FROM UNITED STATES.

6. ADDOU STATED SOMALIA'S PRIMARY INTEREST WAS TO AVOID WAR AND DECLAIMED "SOMALIA WILL NEVER SHOOT FIRST GUN." HE STRESSED SOMALIA'S FLEXIBLE POSITION AND PROMISED SOMALI TROOPS WOULD WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY AFTER ASSURANCES THAT ETHIOPIANS DOING LIKEWISE. ADDOU ADDED GSDR WILLING TO HAVE AFRICAN OBSERVERS ALONG BORDER AT ANY TIME. (MEMCON FOLLOWS).

7. ACTION REQUESTED:

FOR ADDIS: AT APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY, EMBASSY MAY WISH DESCRIBE SOMALI DEMARCHE TO IEG OFFICIALS. AT SAME CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 143589

TIME, EMBASSY MIGHT SUGGEST, IN LINE MOGADISCIO 1064, THAT PRESENCE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR IN MOGADISCIO MIGHT BE HELPFUL DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF TENSION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. IN VIEW CONTINUING OAU INTEREST IN ETHIO-SOMALI PROBLEM, EMBASSY MAY AT ITS DISCRETION WISH PASS TO APPROPRIATE OAU SECRETARIAT OFFICIAL SUBSTANCE OF LATEST SOMALI APPROACH TO US. RUSH

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